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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	ACQ-01	CEA-01	CTME-00
	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01
	E-00	FBIE-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01
	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	FMP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/022W				

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R 011521Z SEP 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1562
INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1730
USDOC WASHDC 3051

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 002647

STATE FOR ARA, ARA/EX, INR, AND EB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/08
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TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PINR, ECON, EFIN, VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER ASSEMBLES DIPLOMATIC CORPS
FOR ECONOMIC/POLITICAL PRESENTATION

CLASSIFIED BY NANCY MASON, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES. REASONS 1.5 (B)
AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) CHARGE ATTENDED A BRIEFING HOSTED BY FOREIGN MINISTER MIGUEL ANGEL BURELLI RIVAS FOR KEY CHIEFS OF MISSION OF VENEZUELA'S DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON AUGUST 26. INVITATIONS FOR THIS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ALAN H FLANIGAN
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED
DATE/CASE ID: 05 JUN 2007 200504156

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MEETING WERE HASTILY FORWARDED TO EMBASSIES ON AUGUST 25, BUT THE MINISTRY GAVE NO REASON FOR ASSEMBLING THESE AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES D'AFFAIRES. SPEAKING IN A PROFESSORIAL MANNER, THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERIOR, FINANCE, AND COORDINATION AND PLANNING (CORDIPLAN) EARNESTLY TRIED TO PUT VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES INTO CONTEXT. PRESENTING AN OPTIMISTIC VISION OF VENEZUELA TODAY, THE MINISTERS OBLIQUELY ADDRESSED POLITICAL RUMORS, AND EXPLAINED THAT THE GOV WOULD SUCCESSFULLY DEAL WITH ITS ECONOMIC CHALLENGES. END SUMMARY.

FOREIGN MINISTER BURELLI: MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

2. (U) ADDRESSING A DIPLOMATIC CORPS THAT DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAD BEEN ASSEMBLED, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BURELLI
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OPENED THE MEETING BY BRIEFLY EXPLAINING THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WAS TO BRING SOME PERSPECTIVE TO VENEZUELA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NEWS. BURELLI, HOSTING THIS MEETING IN THE CEREMONIAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE MINISTRY -- CASA AMARILLA -- INTRODUCED THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR, FINANCE, AND COORDINATION AND PLANNING (CORDIPLAN) TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. BURELLI ADDED THAT HE WAS MEETING WITH EACH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TO LOOK FOR POINTS OF AGREEMENT ON FOREIGN POLICY, AND TO EXPLAIN VENEZUELA'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS.

MINISTER OF INTERIOR AGUIAR: POLITICAL STABILITY TO CONTINUE

3. (U) MINISTER OF INTERIOR ASDRUBAL AGUIAR BEGAN HIS REMARKS BY OFFERING A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON. THE BOTTOM LINE OF AGUIAR'S PRESENTATION WAS THAT VENEZUELA WAS MORE STABLE TODAY THAN IT WAS FOUR AND HALF YEARS AGO, AND THAT THIS STABILITY WOULD CONTINUE. AGUIAR EXPLAINED THAT SINCE FEBRUARY 4, 1992, WHEN THEN-LIEUTENANT COLONEL HUGO CHAVEZ FRIAS LAUNCHED HIS COUP ATTEMPT, VENEZUELA HAD WEATHERED: THE IMPEACHMENT OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, A TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT, AND SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. AGUIAR REMARKED THAT PRESIDENT CALDERA HAD WORKED TO HEAL THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES, AND THAT THIS WAS IN PART ACHIEVED BY REINCORPORATING SOME COUP PARTICIPANTS IN THE MILITARY AND BY GRANTING PARDONS, BUT EXPELLING OTHERS FROM THE MILITARY. CALDERA HAD ALSO WORKED, AGUIAR ASSERTED, TO RE-ESTABLISH POLITICAL STABILITY. TODAY, SAID AGUIAR, VENEZUELA WAS "PEACEFUL," AND ENJOYED "ECONOMIC STABILITY AND SOCIAL PEACE." ONCE AGAIN, AGUIAR STATED, "THE POLITICAL

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PROCESS IS OPEN."

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4. (U) AGUIAR NOTED THAT THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS, BEGUN IN 1989, HAD BROUGHT GOVERNMENT CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE IN VENEZUELA. THE GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO AGUIAR, NOW ENJOYED THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF ITS CITIZENS, AND THERE WAS GREATER PARTICIPATION. AS AN EXAMPLE OF GREATER PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, AGUIAR STATED THAT PEOPLE WHO ONCE TRIED TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT NOW SOUGHT TO ENGAGE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

5. (U) TOUCHING UPON THE DIFFICULTIES AT THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CNE), AGUIAR FIRMLY ASSERTED THAT THERE WOULD BE ELECTIONS THIS YEAR. HE STATED THAT MORE PEOPLE WERE REGISTERED TO VOTE, AND THAT THE MILITARY WOULD PROVIDE SECURITY FOR THE ELECTIONS. AGUIAR DECLARED THE CALDERA GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN PLANNING FOR A PEACEFUL TRANSITION FOR FOUR AND HALF YEARS. AGUIAR ASSERTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MAINTAIN ORDER AND STABILITY THROUGHOUT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

6. (C) (COMMENT: AGUIAR'S TALK OBLIQUELY SOUGHT TO DISPEL THREE RUMORS: FIRST, THAT CHAVEZ WOULD NOT RESPECT THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS; SECOND, THAT THERE WAS A PLOT TO MAKE CNE CANCEL THE ELECTIONS; AND, FINALLY, THAT PRESIDENT CALDERA HAD BEEN PLANNING TO REMAIN IN POWER OR TO FACILITATE AN UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT. AGUIAR'S COMMENTS WERE IN KEEPING

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